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ABSTRACT

Characteristics of small college administration as it applies to the future are described. Consideration is given to the process for anticipating change in the circumstances surrounding colleges, identifying opportunities, and planning to take advantage of positive changes in the environment (i.e., future focused planning). The use of the Planning and Data System for effective college administration is also discussed. Characteristics of successful small colleges include: innovativeness, intuitive decision making by experienced leaders, administering through people rather than organizational structures, and well run operations. Future focused planning involves four phases: clarifying the mission and purpose of the institution, anticipating change in institutional environments, identifying opportunities, and positioning and contingency planning. Modules of the Planning and Data System concern mission, marketing, curriculum outcomes, recruitment, financial aid, retention, faculty, libraries, instructional program, staff, and fund raising. The modules can be used in ad hoc research and by the office of institutional research. Products of institutional research and considerations in choosing a budgeting system are briefly considered. (SW)

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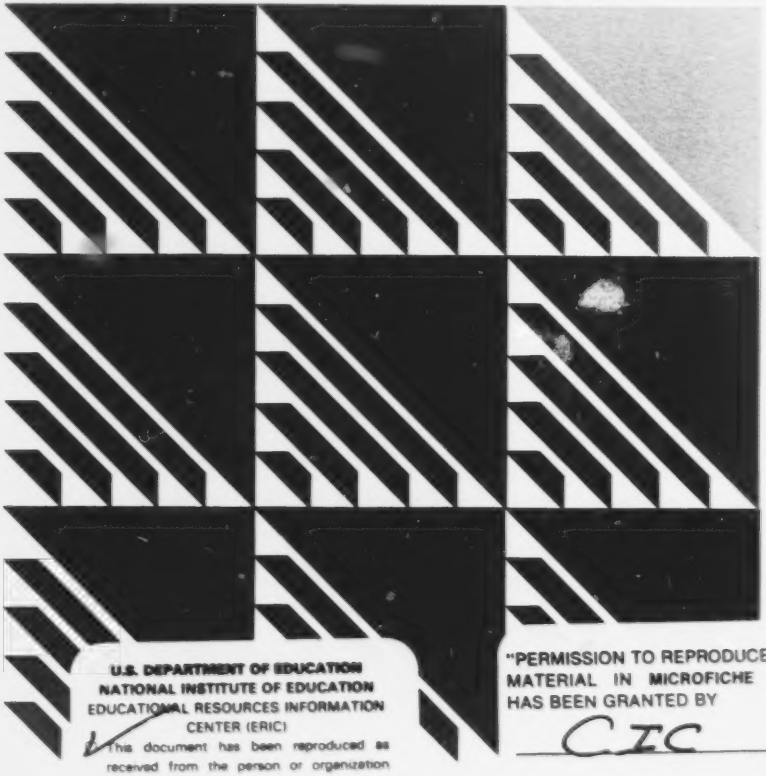
FUTURE FOCUSING

AN ALTERNATIVE TO LONG-RANGE PLANNING



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Robert D. Peck

COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES • 1983

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FOREWORD

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is pleased to share the results of some recent research on the important topic of small college planning. *Future Focusing: An Alternative to Long-Range Planning* is a practical guide for college presidents and administrative officers who wish to avoid the pitfalls and take advantage of the opportunities which are emerging in an uncertain future—who wish to make their planning creative and responsive.

In approaching the task of preparing this guide, Robert Peck set aside his previous views and opinions about how small colleges are or ought to be administered. He sought to discover and describe, in as objective a fashion as possible, how successful colleges managed their affairs. He was looking for the secrets of success without regard for their origins or their justification. This "anthropological" method lead to a new theory, a new justification for the behavior and the practices of college presidents. Peck calls the small college an "entrepreneurial enterprise" and the presidents "entrepreneurs." In doing so, he is careful to point out that entrepreneurship in a classical sense is essentially an innovative, future-oriented activity. Though it does involve risk taking, it is not a wreckless, hip-shooting style.

Perhaps the most important contribution to be found in this guide is the concept of colleges as cultures. The driving force in small liberal arts colleges is a "noble vision," a mission and purpose made up of a constellation of values worth preserving within the context of an organizational culture. Leadership in such an organization means building the culture while looking for those developments in the environment which will advance the "vision." This forward-looking approach, Peck calls "future focusing." He contends that it is the new form of strategic planning, not just because it is confirmed by some of the most recent research in the field of management, but because it has proven to be effective in the history of independent higher education.

During the past seven years, the Council of Independent Colleges has brought to small colleges a group of planning and data modules specially designed for their use. This series of management information tools, known as the Planning and Data System (PDS), has been widely used for the purposes of improving the internal administration of over 200 colleges around the country. What has been missing until now was a way to combine the several parts of the PDS into a single planning process. With the release of this manual, that process is now fully described and documented. The CIC Planning and Data System is now complete.

The many people who have contributed to this effort cannot be recognized here. They were members of Task Forces and Review Panels associated with the several modules. Their names appear in the manuals associated with the modules. But we do wish to thank them all for their singular and valuable assistance.

This manual is dedicated to the presidents of the 19 successful small colleges who revealed their "secrets" to Robert Peck. They were both frank and honest as well as generous with their time. Though we cannot recognize them by name for reasons of confidentiality, it is to them that we are all indebted.

Finally, CIC was privileged to receive financial support from a foundation that is renowned for its commitment to American colleges and universities—particularly to small independent colleges. This publication and the project on which it is based, was supported by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Gary H. Quehl
President
The Council of Independent Colleges
Washington, D.C.
May 1983

PREFACE

Small colleges are cultures, that is, they are social organizations with a set of values which bind all members into a common outlook with a common goal. The distinguishing feature is cultural, however, not technical or rational. Culture is a distinctively human phenomenon. It rests on human behavior and responds to basic human needs. Leadership in the small college consists of building the culture through promotion of values to which the members of the community respond. In this context, the chief administrative officer promotes the formulation of the mission and purpose of the community, provides the means of communication within the community, and insures that the operations are well run and well supported.

From a purely practical point of view, successful leaders carry out their tasks by appealing to the human need for meaning, for "owning" decisions, for positive reinforcement, for "belonging," and for transcendance. They combine this with a toughness which is swift and certain. When the culture is violated, when the rules of the society are broken, or when the values are flaunted, presidents do not hesitate to assert the full force of their offices.

Confronted with a host of problems which threaten the very existence of many of the nation's small colleges, we could fall into an easy trap. We easily could believe that our problems involve marketing, financial development, broadening our programs, contracting our size and scope—in short, that our problems are confined to an organizational adjustment to a changing environment. If we were to believe this it would be because we also believed that the issue is organizational and institutional rather than cultural.

The trap is to become so preoccupied with preserving the institution that we fail to notice that its purpose might be lost. Nothing should be done to save a college just for the sake of saving it. The challenge is to bring together a set of values which are worth saving.

It is important to make this observation at the outset because we will be discussing organizational and administrative activities almost exclusively. And unless we take special care, we could fall into the trap ourselves. It will become apparent, we hope, that the suggestions contained in the following pages are designed to build and sustain that peculiar culture for which the small, independent, liberal arts college was created.

In this volume we do not intend to go into the history of management theory or the philosophical and logical premises which define such theories. Our purpose is satisfied if we can observe that a relationship exists between the

characteristic patterns of small college administration and a more generalized description of organizational behavior. In this connection a recent new book on American business appears to have value—*In Search of Excellence* by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman (Harper and Row, 1982). In many ways, the struggle of American business to formulate a new and more effective theory for its own use parallels ours for finding a metaphor for small college leadership. As Peters and Waterman say, "The need is desperate if today's managers, their advisors, and the teachers of tomorrow's managers in the business schools are to be up to the challenge. . . ." (p. 102)

The idea of "future focusing", about which this manual is concerned, came to me in the midst of a series of visits to some of the most successful small colleges around the country. I was visiting these colleges looking for the secrets of their success. What I learned will be discussed at some length in the chapters which follow. Here I want to thank the Presidents, Chief Academic and Chief Business Officers of these colleges—they know who they are. Though few—if any—of them would agree with the descriptions and characterizations I have provided in their entirety, they have all expressed support of the findings in general and they have all encouraged me to continue this kind of study.

I am not embarrassed to confess that I have shamelessly sought the comments and criticisms of nearly all of my friends and acquaintances. The end result is that my indebtedness is extensive. On the other hand, none of these people can be blamed for anything in this manuscript. Only the staff of the Council of Independent Colleges should be mentioned and then only for praise.

This project and this book were made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Under the encouragement and direction of E. Alden Dunham, Program Officer of the Carnegie Corporation, the Planning and Data System of the Council of Independent Colleges was developed over a number of years. That work is culminated in this book the intent of which is to provide a framework within which various planning and administrative information systems can be focused on the opportunities which a changing environment provide. Small colleges across the country are indebted to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for support of such efforts as this. And I am personally grateful for the opportunity to be part of this undertaking.

Robert D. Peck
Washington, D.C.
1983

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword i

Preface iii

PART I. THE NEED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN SMALL COLLEGES

A. Introduction and Background 1

B. The Concept of "Future Focusing" 2

C. Administrative Information Systems 3

D. The Relationship Between Rational and Future Focused Planning 4

PART II. CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

A. Background 7

B. Seven Characteristics of Successful Small Colleges 7

C. Observations 8

D. The Structure of Future Focused Planning 12

PART III. A PROCESS FOR FUTURE FOCUSED PLANNING

A. Introduction 15

B. Phase I. Clarifying the Mission and Purpose of the Institution 16

C. Phase II. Institutional Environments: Anticipating Change 17

D. Phase III. Focusing on the Future: Identifying Opportunities 19

E. Phase IV. Positioning and Contingency Planning 20

F. Reiteration and Monitoring for Change 21

G. The Outcome 21

PART IV. AN ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM
A. Mission and Purpose—"The Strategic Vision" 25
B. The Curriculum 27
C. The Student 28
D. Instructional Resources 31
E. Institutional Support 33
F. Institutional Research 34
G. Budgeting 37
PART V. CONCLUSIONS 39
BIBLIOGRAPHY 41

LIST OF FIGURES

1. A Future Focused Planning System 16
2. Work Sheet for Changes and Plans 23
3. Administrative Information System 36
4. Leadership, Planning, and Operations in Small Colleges 40

THE NEED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN SMALL COLLEGES

A. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

During the 70s, the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC)[1] conducted a number of programs for improving management and developing more effective programs and services for students. Projects focused on faculty, student, and administrative development; training of fund-raising personnel; workshops for academic deans; competency-based curriculum; and student attrition and recruitment programs.

Another major CIC undertaking was the sponsorship of a series of projects related to data that are useful in college management. Early interest in this kind of service was developed in the mid-'60s when CIC colleges adopted a planning strategy and data display format recommended in Sidney Tickton's *Ten Year Budget*. Subsequently, new analytic and comparative unit cost tools were developed to gather and analyze instructional cost information from a small sample of CIC colleges. This initial pilot project proved to be so helpful to those participating that more than 100 liberal arts colleges adopted the format.

The Institutional Research and Planning Project (IRPP) grew out of the program. The IRPP was funded by a Title III grant from the United States Office of Education in the amount of $900,000 over three years. A comprehensive pilot project involving 15 CIC colleges, the IRPP studied total information and planning needs of participating colleges and pilot tested existing and newly designed management tools, techniques, and procedures in these institutions.

To ensure that the most recent and appropriate strategies in this area were understood and used, CIC sponsored a major study in 1973. Based on this research many new techniques were tested, refined or redesigned, and implemented by participating colleges.

In addition to several campus implementations of comprehensive information and planning systems that resulted from this project, two important concepts emerged:

1. *The importance of a comprehensive body of administrative data.* In such a system, information must facilitate the functions of operation, analysis, and planning and must represent each important area of the institution. The format also must provide for the interaction of data between institutional units for the

[1] Prior to 1980, the organization was called the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges (CASC).

purpose of analysis as well as the consideration of priorities and trade-offs. The format must always encourage a focus on the goals of the institution and some analysis of the achievement of these goals. A strong preference also emerged for comparative data in as many areas as possible.

This finding resulted in the CIC Research and Management Project, which was funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The project developed 11 modules over a seven-year period; these data gathering and analysis modules constitute a system referred to as the CIC Planning and Data System (PDS). More than 250 institutions have used one or more of these modules to date.

2. *The importance of the concept of a "planning system."* Those involved in the IRPP soon discovered that providing elaborate analytic and planning data tended to frustrate administrators. It became apparent that administration requires more than data, and that campus-wide processes had to be established not only for the collection, analysis, display and *use* of data, but also for the transformation of these data into intelligence. The solution was to produce a master guide which would focus on the need for colleges to understand the processes for moving into the future in accordance with some predetermined ends. The present volume is our response to this need.

B. THE CONCEPT OF "FUTURE FOCUSING"

There are systematic ways to direct efforts toward predetermined ends. These are commonly referred to as long-range, rational, or linear planning systems. However, there are other less systematic, but apparently effective ways as well. Little has been written about them, at least in educational literature, but they do exist among colleges and universities. For lack of a better term, these ways will be called "future focusing".

Classical long-range planning systems presuppose rather stable organizational structures. These are based on *optimality* analysis—i.e., getting the optimum out of an organization—and deal with rather well-defined arrays of problems. They work well when external environmental factors are relatively stable and when the consequences of actions are reasonably predictable. Furthermore, since the processes are essentially rational, they presume that the people involved behave rationally.

Small colleges are less stable than they once were, their environments are changing rapidly and dramatically, and people are not quite as rational as planners would like. For these and a number of other reasons, one must look far and wide for a small independent college that is applying classical long-range planning processes to its future-oriented decisions.

Nevertheless, "future focused" administration is practiced widely. Indeed, it is probably the predominant form of anticipating and preparing for the future among small independent colleges. Why this has not been recognized more positively or been the subject of more research is not altogether clear. The

investigations on which this guide is based do not presume to redress this fault.[2] What they do provide is a generalized framework within which a more realistic and instrumental process can be created.

More than that, however, the studies which were made for this manual were intended primarily to find out how certain small colleges did *in fact* anticipate and prepare for the future, how they determined what that future was likely to be, how available resources were being mustered to address the issues of the future, and what additional "tools" might make that process more certain.

Future focused planning is the new wave. It is a way of approaching the future which provides the greatest flexibility, retains the broadest range of options, and most encourages the innovation and creativity which have characterized independent higher education from its beginnings. The concept will be elaborated further in PART III of this manual. In brief, however, future focused planning is based on the discovery that a certain collection of general activities on small college campuses strongly resemble economic entrepreneurship. *The small independent college is an entrepreneurial enterprise, and its leaders are entrepreneurs in the best classical sense of those terms.* And, just as the concept and function of entrepreneurship is necessary for a full understanding of the development of economic systems, so is it required for a complete grasp of the development of our educational system.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that all educational efforts are entrepreneurial. It also would be a mistake to suggest that all the individual parts of an entrepreneurial institution are also entrepreneurial in character. This is clearly not the case. What this means, for the purpose of this manual, is that there is a rather clear dividing line between the *administration* of the institution and its *future focused planning*.

In PART II we have sought to highlight essentially future focused activities not merely to show how they differ from more clearly understood administrative ones, but to call particular attention to their role in responding to the uncertainties of the future. It is precisely in the confrontation with uncertainty, ambiguity, confusion, and unpredictability that future focusing comes into its own. Classical rational planning systems seek to reduce uncertainty and confusion about the future. Future focusing, on the other hand, seeks to *capitalize* on the opportunities hiding behind ambiguity and uncertainty.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Regardless of whether planning is to be done in the rational or the future focused mode, certain basic information is required. First, certain data and information are necessary for routine operations. Successful institutions are well run on a daily basis. The people involved know what they are doing and what the

[2] This manual grew out of a study of 19 successful small colleges conducted in the fall of 1981, as well as telephone interviews with approximately 245 college presidents conducted in the spring of 1982.

consequences of their decisions are. For this they require data and information on a regular basis. Second, there are information and "intelligence" requirements for anticipating the future. It is at this point that the two modes of planning—rational and future focused—begin to differ. Rational planning requires trend data, forecasts, and projections. Future focusing requires the history of decisions, probable future scenarios, and a wide range of innovative ideas.

The Planning and Data System (PDS) of the Council of Independent Colleges was designed to provide the basic data and information necessary for the effective routine operation of a small college. Uniform data element definitions are used and data sources are largely readily available on every campus. The PDS also includes some of the elements which rational and future focused planning have in common, along with a few of the singular requirements of the two modes.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of small college administration is its reliance on intelligence more than on data. In most cases this is a highly informal yet sophisticated system by which the president, and other administrative officers, keep themselves informed about what is happening in the institutional environment. The problem here is not with information gathering but rather with the transformation of information into intelligence. "What is happening" is not a trivial judgment. It is an assessment of the significance or meaning of events and data in the wider context of moving the institution into the future as an organized whole.

We will refer to these data, information, and intelligence components as parts in an administrative information system. Different from a management information system, this system supports more than management tasks. It supports the intuitive and collegial decision making which characterizes small college leadership, while at the same time assuring that the underlying operations of the institution are well managed.

D. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RATIONAL AND FUTURE FOCUSED PLANNING

One might get the impression from what has been said already that the two modes of planning to which we have made reference are in competition with one another; that they present an either/or choice for the president. This is not the case. An examination of the two modes will show that there are certain tasks which demand one mode and others which demand the other mode. It is a matter of finding the appropriate place for the application of the appropriate mode.

A general rule of thumb is that the higher the level of ambiguity or uncertainty the more appropriate the future focusing mode is, while the opposite holds for a rational mode. This is merely a rule of thumb, however, and should not be taken as a universal dictum. The facts are that the most innovative skill of

a creative leader has ready application in even the most unambiguous tasks—such as budgeting. Another rule of thumb is that the more general the issue, the more appropriate the future focusing mode is. But again, this is only a rule of thumb.

The reason for calling attention to these alternatives is to isolate the more pragmatic fact that any institution hoping for a future needs to be well run at the operational level. This calls for a well articulated, rational program of administration based on systematic data collection and analysis, formalized processes for making changes, and self-conscious methods of evaluation. At the same time, the institution must recognize that it is poised on the uncertain edge of the future and must be ready to grasp opportunities as they arise, not as they may or may not have been anticipated in a "long-range plan."

The difficulty is that there is no clear dividing line between the circumstances in which one or the other of the two modes is appropriate. It depends on the circumstances and the successful leader must know intuitively which mode is appropriate. All we can do is provide guidelines based on observation.

We will describe in this manual the characteristics of small college administration as it applies to the future. This will be followed by a description of a process for anticipating change in the circumstances surrounding colleges, the identification of opportunities, and the planning necessary to take advantage of positive changes in the environment—i.e., future focused planning. Detailed descriptions and recommendations regarding systems for the improvement of the continuing operations of a small college will come next in a section designed to integrate the various modules of the Planning and Data System (PDS) into a supporting system for effective administration.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

A. BACKGROUND

Small colleges are neither operated nor planned in a systematically rational manner. They do not operate out of reason but out of will. They are essentially entrepreneurial in nature, particularly when facing the uncertainties of the future. Yet, there are dimensions to their organization which are amenable to classic management and planning techniques. These must be separated from the entrepreneurial dimensions before the two can be recombined and coordinated in an effective institution. The secret to success in the small college is the skill with which these two essentially antithetical dimensions of administration are orchestrated.

In this section, we intend to separate out the entrepreneurial characteristics of successful small colleges. We will list and elaborate on these principal characteristics and suggest some of their implications for institutional planning.

B. SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL SMALL COLLEGES

1. Successful small colleges are dominated by a commitment to mission and purpose. They have a very strong "strategic vision," a guiding perception of what they are, why they exist, where they are going, and whom they seek to serve, coupled with a well understood set of implementing values.

2. Successful small colleges are opportunity-conscious—opportunistic in the best sense. They constantly are trying to anticipate change and identify opportunities which will advance them toward their goals. They typically view their environment in terms of opportunities rather than obstacles.

3. Successful small colleges are highly innovative and creative. Both from an institutional and leadership perspective, these colleges are among the most innovative of all institutions of higher education. For a variety of reasons, they have been pioneers in almost all the innovations which characterize higher education today.

4. Successful small colleges make decisions about the future and change largely by intuition. A number of surprising activities are carried on by the leaders of these colleges, the purpose of which is to enhance and improve the quality of intuitive judgment.

5. Successful small colleges administer through people rather than through organizational structures. This means that one of the most important tasks for these institutions is the selection of administrative officers for the college.

6. Successful small colleges seek to be effective not merely efficient. Efficiency is defined in terms of the effectiveness of the programs in realizing the objectives of the college.

7. Successful small colleges are extremely well run at the operational level.

The successful small college is one that uses informed judgment to make effective use of opportunities to advance towards its goals.

C. OBSERVATIONS

1. **The Mission and Purpose.** Small liberal arts colleges talk a great deal about mission and purpose. Individual colleges do differ but as a group they like to claim recognition for doing something no other educational sector does. At its most general level, the purpose of a liberal arts college is to graft each new generation into the stream of human culture and civilization. This is not merely an educational enterprise, but a combination of the development of people as members of the human race developing in history with the advancement and aggrandizement of that history. Scholarship in the liberal arts college is not aimed immediately at expanding the store of knowledge but at informing the lives of young people with that knowledge. It is essentially a synthetic operation aimed at the whole person.

The particular mission of these institutions creates for each one a set of institutional values—a subsidiary set of purposes and activities which inform each campus élan. These values define the ways in which relationships are formed, and they define the content of nearly all activities. Furthermore, they are supported by an array of folklore and festivity. The more formal and institutionalized expressions, such as convocations, lectureships, commencements, athletic contests, homecoming celebrations, etc., are one part of the occurance. In addition, the informal exploits of college students, such as fraternity parties, practical jokes, and the like, also support institutional values.

At any number of levels, institutional values are both articulated and instilled. They are crucial to the administration of the institution as well. The administration of successful colleges evidences not only an understanding and appreciation of the function of values in organizational life, but of the way in which they are kept alive, used, modified, and implemented. Success is in part the result of articulating unique institutional values and maintaining them effectively in the self-conscious decisions of administration.

2. **Opportunity Consciousness.** One of the most astonishing comments presidents make is that they would lose control of their institutions if they tried to plan and operate the way the experts say they should. The theoretical basis for conventional planning systems is systematically deductive. It calls for organizational stability and suggests management structures in which variations system-

atically are either cancelled out or suppressed. There is no place in such systems for intuition, innovation, or opportunism because the theory presumes no need for them.

What one finds on successful campuses, however, is an entirely different system and an entirely different theory, one in which intuition, innovation, and opportunism are not only present but essential. The reasons are not merely that the organizations are systematically unstable, but the whole environment in which they live and function is ambiguous, uncertain, and unpredictable in principle. And, more important, people do not behave in the highly rational way which management theory presupposes.

In practical terms, what one observes is a whole range of activities, the purpose of which is to anticipate change, identify opportunities, and retain flexibility. These activities are carried out by leaders who are ready to move and willing to take the necessary risks. Control, which is a basic concern of presidents, rests with initiative—who makes the initiating move and when.

The heart of the process lies in the methods used for anticipating change and identifying opportunities. In successful colleges, these activities, though deliberate and self-conscious, are not highly developed from an organizational or an analytical point of view. "The president doesn't like surprises" is a common saying on college campuses. Among other things, this means that the anticipation of change is a regular part of administrative activity. But success depends in large degree on the sophistication of this process.

3. **Innovation and Creativity.** The catalogue of innovations on small college campuses is impressive. They include operational innovations, program innovations, faculty and staff innovations, institutional improvisations such as extension centers and leased classrooms, joint real estate and investment ventures, collaborations with business and industry for educational programs, bond financing, marketing and advertising programs, programs for non-traditional students, and new initiatives in international and global education. One gets the clear impression, furthermore, that these sort of things are the rule on these campuses.

It is also clear, however, that the presidents themselves are not the primary source of the new ideas and creative innovations which characterize their colleges. Presidents perform two essential roles in this context. First, they actively solicit new ideas from all sources both on and off the campus, a continual gleaning process conducted in formal and informal ways. Second, they are the instigators of change. Presidents in successful colleges appear to perform more as collaborators, facilitators, consensus makers, and incentive providers than as autocratic managers. They work through and with the influential people on campus as well as through the organizational structure. They provide the context for change and are the primary formers of opinion on the campus. This means that creative response and innovation take place in a collaborative setting by the force of will and not autocratic dictation.[3]

[3] Jack Lindquist, *Strategies for Change* (Washington, D.C.: Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges, 1978).

4. **Intuition.** The characteristic of leaders in small colleges that most distinguishes them from the leaders of larger institutions is that the most important decisions they make about the future of the institution are intuitive. If "judgment is the enemy of management science"[4] then at successful small colleges intuition is the heart of administrative craft. The question this raises is not whether it is appropriate or not, but how intuition is sharpened, refined, and informed; that is, how powers of intuition and judgment can be enhanced so decisions will benefit the institutions more.

Presidents at small colleges are engaged in activities designed to improve their intuitive decision making. We call these activities *intelligence gathering* and the means by which it is done an *intelligence network*. The network includes the administrative officers who report to the president, other administrators who report indirectly to the president, and people and offices who collect information about the college. In addition, presidents "walk the campus": they visit with faculty, students, staff, and other employees associated with the college. They visit with people in the community, parents, and friends of the college. They attend school functions not merely out of interest in the function but as a further means of gathering intelligence. By the widest possible means, administrators tap into the interpersonal relations, ideals, ambitions, impressions, feelings, and insights which define the spirit and the functioning of the institution. And they are listeners.

The result is not merely information but intelligence. Furthermore, information and data themselves must be transformed into intelligence. The problem for leaders faced with ambiguity, uncertainty, and unpredictability is to discover the meaning of data and information for decision making about the future. This is an instructive process, one based on analogies. In other words, administrators use their memory of past decisions to instruct and inform their judgments about the present and the future, thus transforming data and information into administrative intelligence.

Conventional management information systems are not very useful for this process. The key element is missing: the context of past decisions. What decisions were made, by whom, under what circumstances, for what reasons, under what pressures, after what debate, and with what ends in mind? Several presidents keep a log, journal, or diary in which these questions and others like them are answered. The purpose is to ensure that the analogy between past and future is kept intact.

Intuition has no better teacher than experience. It is no accident that most presidents of small colleges come up through the ranks of faculty and administration. Though they typically have taken advanced degrees in large public universities, they have begun their undergraduate work at small colleges similar to those they now head. This is true of chief academic and financial officers as well.

The exercise of judgment is central to small college leadership. The

[4] Richard Cyert, "Management Science and University Management", *Management Science Applications to Academic Administrators* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981), p. 27.

refinement, sharpening, informing, and focusing of judgment is a continuing preoccupation of presidents and their administrative officers.

5. **Administration Through People.** Though there are organizational charts and hierarchical structures at small colleges, they are more nominal than functional. For example, job descriptions—when they exist at all—are a mere formality. There is a central or core function for each position, but around each there is an array of duties and responsibilities which differ from college to college and from time to time in the same college. This is because these ancillary tasks are assigned on the basis of interest and ability, which do not appear on the organizational chart. They also reflect the importance of the job at a particular time. Tasks are moved back and forth, from office to office, depending on their importance at a given time.

A people-oriented administration reveals itself further when administrative personnel are selected—and terminated. The selection process presumes basic competence to do the job, a capability that is seldom even investigated. What is uppermost is "will this person fit in at our college?"

Presidents often remark that the selection of administrative partners is their most important task. And they also insist that they cannot afford to make mistakes, but when they do, they correct them promptly. Only in this area do we see anything resembling autocratic behavior in these leaders. Successful small college administration is a team effort, and the creation and maintenance of a team is of paramount importance.

6. **Effectiveness vs. Efficiency.** A careful examination of the organizational objectives of these colleges reveals that they are designed to realize institutional purposes in effective ways rather than efficient ones. This does not mean that successful colleges are not efficient. What it does mean is that efficiency is defined in terms of the effective outcomes of institutional programs. Educational institutions are not cost sensitive; they are expenditure sensitive. In an industry which depends for its outcomes on the commitment of its "labor force"—its faculty—to the mission, purpose, and values of institutions, there is no direct relationship between cost and product. Furthermore, expenditures are viewed as talent and time as well as money, which means that they are all flexible. For example, talent is applied to programs frequently without regard for the "cost" of that talent because the solution must be as effective as possible. This is why a dean often takes on what might appear to be a low level task.

The challenge to academic leaders, therefore, is to deploy the talents, time, and finances of an institution to the realization of its objective in a balanced fashion. This task is not amenable to conventional productivity tests nor are conventional cost saving measures applicable. What one finds at successful colleges is an orchestration of the three elements in such a way that the programs result in lower expenditures overall.

7. **Well Run Operations.** The danger we run in describing small college administration in the above fashion is that the daily operations of these institutions might appear to be ignored or treated as relatively unimportant. Nothing is farther from the truth at successful colleges. These institutions are conspicuously well run at the operational level. They collect a great deal of information

about themselves. They know where they are financially and have well articulated systems for keeping track of administrative activities. While their management information systems tend to be very streamlined and limited in scope, their administrative intelligence systems are highly developed. Record keeping systems are lean but carefully operated.

Highly detailed and documented projections have been largely replaced by systems for the anticipation of change, and conventional long-range planning has been transformed into processes for the identification of opportunities and pitfalls. Conventional planning systems, when used at all, function largely as a means for obtaining a subjective consensus on the mission and purpose of the institution.

At successful colleges, all these activities are administered and supervised carefully, but they are almost invisible to the broadest administrative levels. One gets the feeling that they happen as a matter of definition; that is, like having a qualified faculty in the classrooms or having a class schedule each term, a successful college simply *has* a well run operational base.

But of course it does not happen by accident.[5] A great deal of attention is paid to operational tasks by those directly responsible and by the top administration on an *ad hoc* basis. Though this is a distinguishing feature of a successful college, there is nothing singular about the activities themselves. As one observes the operation of successful college administrations one also observes that the real driving force of the success is not in that operation but rather in the leadership style and skill as an entrepreneurial activity.

D. THE STRUCTURE OF FUTURE FOCUSED PLANNING

As we examine these characteristics, we see a pattern of activities emerge on the basis of which we can construct a process for anticipating the future and acting on our assumptions. First, there must be institution-wide "ownership" of the mission and purpose. Without a clear perception of what the college is, what it is to become and why, combined with a commitment of all or nearly all of the people working in the college to that purpose, the college cannot look forward to the future with any confidence.

Second, procedures for anticipating changes in the environment—changes which will affect the aspirations of the college—must be designed and instituted. To do this, the current environment must be delineated clearly and the resources of the institution appraised candidly. This is done to prevent surprises, to give the institution time to respond, and to open up the future.

Third, opportunities should be identified. Colleges should look at the future as offering opportunities, not as providing roadblocks or pitfalls. Every future has opportunities even for the most restricted of institutions. Looking at the future in this positive way is fundamental to moving an institution from a failure syndrome to a success syndrome.

[5] See PART IV for an Administrative Information System.

Finally, contingency and "first step" plans should be created. It is not only necessary for a college to anticipate changes in the future, and to identify the opportunities offered by these changes, the college must be poised for change; that is, it must have taken the necessary first steps which will put it in a position to move toward opportunities if and when they arise. In each case, first steps are possible and they ought to be taken even for events of relatively low probability.

20 1

A PROCESS FOR FUTURE FOCUSED PLANNING

A. INTRODUCTION

In this section, we intend to address the way in which colleges focus their attention on the future, how they can develop and implement a process for anticipating the changes which will affect them in the future, and how they can identify and take advantage of the new opportunities created by changing circumstances. The ultimate objective of these activities is to position the college to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Future focused planning is a four-phase process. It is similar to the process used in conventional long-range or linear planning, but at some very important junctures, a future focused process takes a different course. This is because its underlying theoretical basis—its philosophical and logical foundation—is radically different, and its basic metaphor is different.

Future focusing is based on an inductive logical foundation. It seeks to direct organizational activities into the contingent rather than the necessary dimensions of the future. It is an empirical rather than a rational activity. It is an effort to create the future rather than react to it. It assumes that the future is essentially ambiguous and therefore aims at capitalizing on the ambiguous and unpredictable rather than trying to reduce and minimize uncertainties.

The metaphor is also different. Long-range and linear planning are based on management systems and organizational structures which use a military metaphor. They presume a chain of command. They delineate line and staff roles and a hierarchy of officers and responsibilities. They use terms like "strategic," "tactical," and "objective" in a military context. Future focusing, on the other hand, uses a team game metaphor. There are designated roles but they arise out of the skills of the players. Activities and "game plans" are devised as a creative response to changing circumstances and are designed to take advantage of the skills of the players on the team.

Because there is a different logic and different metaphor at work in small colleges, we need to be particularly alert when the processes used in conventional long-range planning and future focused planning appear to be similar. This is clearly noticeable when we prepare a mission and purpose statement for the college. In the case of conventional planning, the purpose of this exercise is to produce a generalized statement on which everyone can agree, which will describe the institution in fairly accurate terms and from which the actions of all

segments of the institution can be logically deduced. From a future focused perspective, the purpose of the exercise is to get an institution-wide subjective consensus on why the institution exists, where it is going, what appropriate actions may be taken to get there, and who can benefit best from its activities. It turns out that the latter exercise can result in production of a document which will satisfy the expectations of conventional planners, but that is a secondary consequence of the more fundamental purpose. The primary role of a statement of mission and purpose is to document the subjective consensus of the community.

A future focused planning program begins with the establishment of this subjective consensus and proceeds to build a set of activities which will put this mission and purpose into place in a highly ambiguous, uncertain, and changing environment. By this means an institution can enhance its chances of success by a creative response (rather than a consolidating reaction).

The four phases of future focused planning are:

Phase I Clarifying the Mission and Purpose of the Institution
Phase II Institutional Environments: Anticipating Change
Phase III Focusing on the Future: Identifying Opportunities
Phase IV Positioning and Contingency Planning[6]

FIGURE 1

A FUTURE FOCUSED PLANNING SYSTEM

PHASE I	PHASE II	PHASE III	PHASE IV
Clarifying the Mission and Purpose	*Institutional Environments*	*Focusing on the Future*	*Positioning and Contingency Planning*
1. The Mission Statement	1. Anticipating Change	1. Identifying Opportunities	1. Positioning
2. The College in Five Years	2. Cataloguing Change	2. Institutional Resources	2. Contingency Planning
3. The Parts of the Whole			

B. PHASE I. CLARIFYING THE MISSION AND PURPOSE OF THE INSTITUTION

Step 1. **The Mission Statement.** The function of a mission statement is to define, express, and gain consensus on the underlying assumptions on which the institution operates. It contains the philosophical, theological, epistemologi-

[6] See Figure 1.

cal, sociological, and political foundations on which the college is built. It states the primary purposes and functions of the institution; e.g., how teaching, research and public service are combined and reflected in the activities of the college. It tells for whom the programs are intended; e.g., traditional students seeking a liberal arts education, career-oriented students, adults, or working people. Finally, it states the basic kinds of programs the institution uses to carry out its purposes; undergraduate, liberal arts, graduate, professional, or career programs.

Consensus on the statement is imperative for the integrity of the institution. It must be debated and argued, analyzed and investigated until it is clear that there is widespread ownership and commitment. It should be remembered, however, that the goal is a *subjective* consensus, not agreement on every detail contained in a document.

A good starting point for this task is to query the constituents of the college about their perceptions and expectations. The *Small College Goals Inventory*, administered by the Educational Testing Service and marketed by the Council of Independent Colleges, is an excellent instrument for this purpose. Using various group processes and committee structures, the work of carrying the inventory forward into an actual statement of mission and purpose, though time consuming, must be allowed to take its natural course. The administration should be active in and committed to the process as well as the outcomes.

Step 2. **Your College in Five Years.** Having gained consensus on the underlying principles which inform the college, the next step is to express in concrete terms what the college would look like in five years if there were reasonable opportunities to accomplish institutional ambitions. This should be a realistic description, not an ideal.

The student body, the programs, the faculty, the organization, the financial condition, and the physical facilities of the college should be described. It should be a vivid and graphic portrayal of an actual college—the one you intend to work in. Obviously, what we are suggesting is the transformation of a set of general principles—the mission statement—into concrete programmatic particulars.

Step 3. **The Parts of the Whole.** In Step 2 we suggested a delineation of the college as a whole. In this Step, we suggest that each major division of the college do the same thing. By this process the description of the institution is complete. This step should include a coordinating effort for there must be harmony between the parts of the institution. A special procedure needs to be established to see that this is done.

C. PHASE II. INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS: ANTICIPATING CHANGE

Step 1. **Anticipating Change.** Of interest at this stage is an assessment of the major elements in the socio-economic environment which contribute to or inhibit the realization of the mission—the ambitions—of the college. In more

conventional planning systems, this activity usually is called "environmental scanning" and the product is a list of "environmental assumptions." Because future focusing has a slightly different perspective, the product we are calling for is better termed a "contextual impact statement." It is the identification and cataloguing of those emerging factors which may have a positive or negative impact on the future of the college.

The difference is that we make no assumptions about certain conditions coming true. Rather we are looking for those trends and emerging changes which impinge on institutional operations in an "if-then" context. In a later phase of the process the "then" side of this equation will be addressed; here we are only looking at the "if" side. The "ifs" are those conditions which may develop in the future which clearly and materially will have an impact on the college. For example, *if* such and such were to happen, then the college would be affected in such and such a way.

It is apparent that many of the trends we see developing, and some that we believe may emerge, may have a profound impact on society at large but only marginal impact on a given institution. What we are calling for is a study of the external environment and the developing trends in that environment which will call for a specific response from a particular institution. These changes fall into three basic categories.

a. Changes which affect the *ethos* of the institution. These are political, economic, and social changes which are reflected in federal, state and public policies and attitudes toward the value of education. These changes find expression in student aid, philanthropic support, and the willingness of parents and young people to pay for a college education.

b. Changes which impinge upon the *programs* of the institution and their relevance to and compatibility with the job market, the social aspirations of young people and their parents, economic and industrial needs, and the shifting emphasis in the economy as a whole.

c. Changes which affect the *delivery* of educational services These are both passive and active in their impact. Changing age structures in student bodies and changing program needs frequently require changing delivery systems. Links with business and industry along new and different lines call for change in the ways in which education is delivered.

Step. 2. **Cataloguing Change.** A catalogue of such changes which appear to be emerging, and others which may emerge, ought to be prepared. The catalogue should be divided into three sections. Section one includes changes which are likely to emerge in five years. In a second section, each change should be given a rating. What is the probability of each change actually developing to the point of impact within the time frame? This rating is important because it serves to focus the attention of the community on the future. In a third section, each catalogued change should be given an indicator; that is, a "flag" by which one can tell if the change is coming into being and whether it will call for a response by the institution. In other words, what will tell the college that the time for a creative response is at hand? (See figure 2.)

This step in the process is designed to make the anticipation of change a

part of the self-conscious operation of the institution. The anticipation of change is a prerequisite to institutional vitality in an unpredictable world.

D. PHASE III. FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE: IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

Step 1. **Identifying Opportunities.** Looking back at the anticipated changes which were developed in Step 1 of the previous phase, we now suggest that each change be examined to see what opportunities it holds for advancing toward the goals of the college. This is the creative phase of the process.

There are two parts to this phase. The first part is external. Recognizing that the source of ideas for responding creatively to new circumstances extends far beyond the campus, people should be designated to gather information from other campuses, other related businesses (e.g., hospitals, artistic organizations, businesses and industries), people doing research into education—in fact, from every possible source. They should attend meetings of educators, conferences, and conventions to glean new ideas and gather intelligence. The second part of the process is internal. Through the use of "skunk works," and "brainstorming" sessions, people on campus should be brought together to probe the anticipated changes for possible opportunities.

In these opportunity sessions, the highest priority changes, as rated in Step 2 in Phase II, should receive attention first. Opportunities should be spelled out in as much detail as possible, particularly those most likely to be realized. It is important to recognize that this is the heart of the process — where the creative response of the institution is begun. It is the source of that resiliency which has characterized these institutions in the past and the center of their future viability. The greatest seriousness should be attached to this step in the process.

Step 2. **Institutional Resources.** There are two dimensions to the assessment of institutional resources. The first is a candid appraisal of the total institution. The second is an appraisal in light of opportunities facing the institution.

An educational institution has both tangible and intangible assets. Cataloguing and profiling these assets is the next step in future focused planning. By tangible assets we mean such things as physical facilities; numbers, qualification, and specialities of faculty; range of student services; and the financial strength of the institution. By intangible assets we mean the image of the college among its constituents (students, donors, business and industry, governmental agencies, alumni, and friends). We also mean its relative competitive position among other colleges and universities for students and for support. And finally we mean the perceived quality of the various programs by both potential students and the organizations to which these students will go after graduation: business, industry, schools, churches, and graduate schools.

The tangible assets are relatively easy to inventory. The same is not true of

the intangibles. There are a number of instruments for this purpose, one of which is available from the Council of Independent Colleges. It is to be found as an appendix to the Planning and Data System manual entitled *A Marketing Approach to Program Development*.

Having gotten a detailed picture of the resources of the institution as a whole, we are now in a position to see how they can be addressed to the opportunities for advancement which appear to be emerging. This task calls on the various divisions within the institution to assess both the tangible and intangible resources they have or they may need to obtain to take advantage of a new opportunity.

This exercise will provide leaders with an estimate of the readiness of the college to change. Obstacles and avenues will become clear. The point of this exercise, however, is to provide the groundwork for the next phase in the process.

E. PHASE IV. POSITIONING AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

What should the institution do to capitalize on an opportunity which has arisen as a result of a changing set of circumstances? This question drives the future focused mode of planning. There is, however, a prior step to be taken. This is the step or steps which should be initiated to *position* the institution to take advantage of a new opportunity.

Step 1. **Positioning.** When one looks at the variety of changes which may affect an institution, and at the opportunities they reveal, one sees things which could be done to gain the initiative, which do not commit one to a specific program but which nevertheless make it possible to enter into a program more quickly and more easily than if one were surprised by it. These are positioning steps which make it possible for an institution to advance with determination. (For example, a portfolio of student loans could be packaged in such a way that they could be sold to a local bank in the event that a shortage of such funds were to develop. This task requires little work but would make it possible to move very quickly if it became necessary.)

Step 2. **Contingency Plans.** A second set of steps which an institution ought to take in order to take best advantage of change are those necessary for the creation of contingency plans. If a new circumstance arises, certain initial plans for grasping new opportunities should already have been made. (These plans also should include actions designed to nullify the most serious negative effects of changes in circumstances as well.)

All positioning steps and contingency plans should be arranged to parallel the anticipated changes and opportunities identified previously. The three parts thus make up a gridwork of initiatives open to the college, all of which have been given careful consideration and advance planning. In this way the institution is poised for action.

Contingency plans are the preliminary steps of an actual full-scale program

plan. This is where conventional linear planning enters the process. Linear planning of the classical kind is used to develop and implement a programmatic response to an actual opportunity. But it is not used for general institutional planning. Linear planning is used to manage a specific response to a concrete opportunity. But it is not used to manage the creative response of the institution as a whole.

F. REITERATION AND MONITORING FOR CHANGE

The processes described above should be repeated on an annual basis. In doing this, attention should be given first to determining what progress has been made toward the goals established in the first phase of the process. In Step 2 we suggested that a realistic description of the college in five years should be prepared. What one wants to know is what progress is being made toward realization of this goal. Furthermore, the process of review will also refine the description itself.

Because of the rapidity of change in the socio-economic environment, the annual review of external factors which affect the institution is of even greater importance. Each year, the emerging trends which impinge upon the ethos, programs, and delivery systems of the college should be examined with great care. The priority listing of changes should be reviewed and revised. The processes of anticipating change thus are incorporated into the continuing administration of the college.

The identification of creative responses also becomes an institutionalized process. In repeating it, new ideas will emerge, new information will be discovered, and revisions and variations will be made. At the same time, new positioning steps and new contingency plans may be necessary. Thus the creative response becomes more and more habitual. The college becomes accustomed to focusing on the future.

G. THE OUTCOME

We have described a decision making process which depends largely on the powers of intuition and judgment of the administrative leadership to provide options and ideas for creative responses, and to position the institution to take advantage of opportunities.

Different from conventional long-range systems in which the various steps can be deduced from the goals and objectives themselves, future focusing concentrates on the goal—what the college is to be in five years—while leaving the steps toward that goal open. Furthermore, this method recognizes that steps must be taken and not just any steps will do. It assists leaders in determining

which steps will move the institution toward its goals under the current circumstances.

Conspicuous by its absence is a "Long-Range Plan for College A." The processes we have described do not produce *a plan*. Rather, the result is a series of continuing activities which focus the creative attention of the institution—particularly its leadership—on what the college is to become. The key, of course, is *the anticipation of change*.

The most critical part of a future focused planning program, however, is the environmental monitoring process. This is the process by which the college is alerted that an anticipated (or unanticipated) change has begun to emerge and a response is called for. This is a trigger mechanism. It causes a decision making response the result of which may be that a first step or a contingency plan goes into operation.

Though the trigger system itself ought to be rather mechanistic—in order to remove as much ambiguity as possible—the response decisions should not be. What happens as a consequence of changing circumstances must be considered and implemented in conformance with the administrative style and leadership skills of the college itself. All of the activities described in this process are designed to feed and support the entrepreneurial character of successful small college leadership. Though they appear to be highly organized and structured, they are so within the context of the collegial mode which informs educational decision making. The rule is that a creative response to changing circumstances is our objective. How this comes about is open to much variation. Future focusing is the process by which the resources of the institution are brought to bear on opportunity.

FIGURE 2

WORK SHEET FOR CHANGES AND PLANS

	Future Condition	Probability	Flag	Opportunities	First Steps	Contingencies
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						

AN ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM

The viability of a well run small college rests on systems and procedures which involve gathering data and information and the analyzing of the administrative operations as a matter of course. Being well run does not happen by accident. Assessment of the internal factors which affect the operations and examination of those external factors which impinge on the institution mark the starting point for a well run college. Following these are other diagnostic devices which determine the effectiveness of the organization in meeting its objectives.

The information system described here uses the elements of the Planning and Data System (PDS) of the Council of Independent Colleges. Each element in this system uses one or more of the PDS modules. Each module was developed by a users Task Force, field tested, and has been used by more than 45 institutions (as many as 120, in some instances) over the past six years.

A. MISSION AND PURPOSE—"THE STRATEGIC VISION"

Unlike almost all other enterprises, institutions of higher education depend in an absolute way on a clear mission and purpose. This is commonly known, but why it works is not so well understood. It works because the content of the individual tasks of teaching, research, counseling, etc. is widely divergent. One can teach and carry on research in a wide variety of subjects and fields. It is the content and the relationship between content and purpose which makes these institutions so different from other enterprises. It is not merely *that* educational institutions teach, do research, and provide public service which makes them unique in our society, it is *what* they teach, research, and provide as service.

That content—in the broadest sense—follows from a self-conscious grasp of the particular mission and purpose of each institution. To ensure that the content of each discrete teaching, research, or related activity does reflect this mission and purpose, institutions have well established means for its accomplishment: curriculum committees, peer evaluations, student evaluations, and the like. What is not so well established, however, are means for evaluating and revising the mission itself particularly in the context of changes in the external environment.

Therefore, all institutions need to make a periodic effort to assess their

missions. There are basically three reasons for this:

To extend ownership of the mission of the institution. One of the most critical elements in the successful operation of a college or university is the extent to which its unique mission and purpose is understood and "owned" by all participants and embodied in all its activities. A periodic assessment will bring clarity and the possibility of "ownership" to that mission and those goals. It also can have considerable value in the efforts of the institution to communicate to its several constituencies what it is doing and why.

To detect discrepancies which may have crept in between the avowed mission and purpose and the actual content of the tasks being performed on campus. On most campuses these discrepancies arise inadvertently. They do not reflect dissatisfaction with the mission. But, in some cases, shifting values and societal pressures cause changes to occur without campus-wide consensus. If these discrepancies are not acknowledged or detected early they can become the source of considerable difficulty.

To determine the "marketability" of the program of the institution. There was a time when we would have used a term like "relevance" in this context. What we mean, at least in general, is a consumer-sensitive approach to fulfilling the mission of the institution. A truly mission responsive institution seeks to identify the felt needs and to clarify the *real* needs of students and society. To respond adequately, it is necessary to know what the relationship is between the mission of the institution and those student and societal needs.

1. **MISSION.** The starting point to preparing a mission statement is an assessment of the goals of the institution. For this purpose, the PDS includes a *College Goals and Climate* module, which is based on the Small College Goals Inventory. One of the results of such an inventory—institution-wide discussions—leads to the clarification and adoption of an old or newly revised mission statement.

The PDS module will assist in developing clarity and growing consensus on purpose and goals by answering questions like these:

- What is our purpose?
- What are the distinctive aspects of the college?
- Does the campus community agree on methods for achieving the college's goals?
- If so, on what particular methods do we agree?
- What climate do we desire for this college?

The objectives of the module are:

- To help colleges identify, clarify, and rank goals by institutional priority.
- To encourage the use of goal statements and goal-oriented thinking in college administration.
- To provide a plan and appropriate assessment instrument for studying goals at small, independent colleges.
- To provide a framework for integrating the outcomes from the PDS modules into a goal-oriented institutional planning process.
- To help distinguish institutional characteristics that affect purposes and goal emphasis.

2. **MARKETING.** Concurrent with an inventory of the institution, the position of the college within its constituent environment should be examined. Who does the college serve? To whom does it appeal and for what reasons? What are the demographic characteristics of its potential students and donors? What is the position of the college in the array of other institutions? To use the current terminology, these are "marketing" questions.

Responsiveness to student constituent needs has always been the mark of a good educational program. But a systematic approach to understanding and serving a changing society is needed. The ability to see what the institution is, why it exists, whom it serves, how it can best serve, and how all this can be communicated may very well hold the key to the vitality of small colleges in the future.

The PDS includes a module titled *A Marketing Approach to Program Development* which was designed to address these issues. In particular, the module will help identify and answer such specific questions as:

- Why do students come to our college?
- Do we agree, as an academic community, on the purpose of the college?
- Which of our academic programs are strongest? How can we take advantage of these strengths?
- Does our financial aid program attract or discourage students?
- Have we given adequate attention to the continuing career development needs of our alumni?
- Is our catalog designed to attract our "type" of student?
- Which social institutions (family, church, school) channel students to our college?
- What should we do with courses and programs with declining enrollments?
- Why do we lose students before they graduate?
- Can we make better use of facilities to serve our institutional purpose?
- Why do people provide financial support to the college?
- What is the "image" of our college? Is it accurate? Is it what we want it to be?

B. THE CURRICULUM

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES. Once a college has defined and clarified its mission, it then becomes necessary to determine whether the programs conform to that mission. Are the outcomes related to the mission? If not, what can be done about it? In addition, an increasing emphasis is being placed on promoting high quality as well as access to educational experiences. Increasingly, student learning outcomes are being viewed as essential to a measure of quality.

Identifying, categorizing, and measuring student learning outcomes is an

extremely difficult task. Even the best efforts of a number of individuals and organizations have not defined the task fully. The PDS module—*Outcomes: Curriculum-embedded Performances*—which addresses this issue focuses on clarifying one portion of the complex puzzle—the performance which is embedded in the curriculum. It is designed to meet the following objectives:

- To provide a useful concept for discussing the college curriculum in light of desired student learning outcomes.
- To present an alternative method for evaluating institutional effectiveness.
- To clarify and strengthen the patterns of accountability in an institution.
- To provide a method for collecting data about student and faculty achievement within a college.
- To promote involvement of students, faculty, and administrators in joint efforts to improve educational outcomes.
- To enable faculty to improve the development, design, and evaluation of courses, programs, and curricula, using desired student learning outcomes as a basis.

C. THE STUDENT

1. **RECRUITMENT.** Since it is the students who are the primary recipients of the services provided by colleges and universities, a well run college needs to know more about students than any of its other constituents. A great deal will have been learned through the Climate and Goals Inventory as described above. But what is not learned is how effective our efforts are to enroll them.

- What is the size of the total pool of students "leads" from which new students will come?
- What percentage of "leads" have a genuine interest in the college and should be considered as "prospects"?
- What percentage of "prospects" will actually become applicants?
- What percentage of applicants will become admitted?
- What percentage of admitted or approved applicants finally will enroll as freshmen, transfers, or readmissions?

These are operational types of questions. They reflect the requirements of an effective recruitment and enrollment plan. They assume that a set of recruitment activities can be designed to encourage prospective students to matriculate, while they also assume that the distribution of various expenditures reflects the philosophy and strategy of the recruitment program.

The PDS *Student Recruitment* module has the following objectives:

- To provide a framework for displaying correlations between the number of students recruited and specific recruitment activities, along with their costs.
- To provide a method for collecting and displaying student recruitment

costs for use in analysis and planning.

- To provide a method for collecting and displaying productivity information useful for analysis and planning.
- To provide comparative data to assist college administrators in identifying strengths and weaknesses of their recruitment programs.
- To identify institutional and societal information bearing on the design, planning, and management of a student recruitment program that suits the needs of an institution.
- To suggest methods and formats for displaying and using data to manage the day-to-day operations of a student recruitment program.
- To provide information on special organizational and policy issues related to student recruitment.
- To recommend a cyclical process for analyzing, planning, and managing a student recruitment program.

The varied activities of the recruitment program must be planned in relation to each other, within the context of the whole college and its personnel. The planning elements will vary according to distinctive administrative styles, budgeting procedures, and the management and planning calendar of a college.

2. **FINANCIAL AID.** Student financial aid may be one of the least understood programs on college campuses. Complex aid administration and rapid changes in local, state, and national programs have made it difficult to understand. Likewise, the lack of basic philosophic administrative principles has caused confusion in the minds of both financial aid directors and their supervisors. For example, one might question whether financial aid is a student personnel program or a business office function. Perhaps the most pressing question in this area of college administration is how financial aid affects several other college functions, including the long-term vitality of the total institution.

These principles and assumptions are addressed in the *Student Financial Aid* module as follows:

- Accurate records, readily accessible and functionally displayed, are central to the planning, analysis, and administration of a student financial aid program.
- Campus-wide consensus and commitment are necessary on such basic issues as providing every eligible student with sufficient and appropriate financial assistance to make study at the institution attractive and financially feasible.
- An effective financial aid operation is one that maximizes student aid assistance while minimizing the burden on the annual budget, and on tuition revenues in particular, to provide that assistance.
- Policy decisions in financial aid are made on the basis of an understanding of the relationships among financial aid and student retention, admissions, and alumni support.
- Decisions relative to the composition of aid packages and the distribution of aid dollars are of *critical* importance; policy should be established at the highest administrative levels rather than solely by the aid officer.

- Planning and projections for student financial aid are best made in concert with overall institutional goals and projections, taking into account local, regional, national, and constituent trends in aid funding and student need levels.

3. **RETENTION.** In recent years, colleges increasingly have become concerned about students who fail to graduate. However, there is no consistent evidence to indicate that attrition rates are higher now than in previous years. One cause of this greater concern is that the number of people of traditional college-age (18 to 22 years) is declining. For well known reasons, this diminishing pool is causing college administrators to become more interested in retaining students.

The recent emergence of such concepts as "market analysis" and "better information for student choice" also has helped to focus attention on student attrition. Colleges have begun to analyze why students select a particular college and how students perceive their college experiences as compared to their expectations. Student and parental interests appear to be changing, and these changes can be studied in ways that show patterns and causes of student attrition.

Some student attrition is unpredictable and unpreventable; some may well be desirable. In either case, these factors must be viewed from the distinctive vantage point of a given college.

The *Student Attrition* module provides tools, methods, and services that will assist college personnel in identifying the magnitude and pattern of student attrition and the factors that seem to influence it. Comparative information from other small colleges is provided to institutions using the data service. Derived nationally from colleges participating in the data service, these anonymous comparative data not only provide new insights into this complex phenomenon but also permit the identification of distinctive patterns and causes at a particular college.

The objectives of the *Student Attrition* module are:

- To help colleges identify their annual rates of attrition for full-time freshmen entering the fall semester.
- To provide a brief data collection instrument and carefully defined data elements so that comparative attrition rates can be generated.
- To display comparative attrition rates by selected variables (i.e., size, type of control, geographic region, and racial mix) so a college can compare itself not only to national norms but also to similar institutions.
- To assist colleges in identifying factors causing attrition on their campuses.
- To provide an instrument for collecting comparative data regarding the causes of student attrition.
- To provide a format for displaying comparative data on the causes of student attrition so that colleges can identify factors of particular importance to them.
- To help colleges interpret and use data in designing retention programs.
- To help colleges establish realistic retention goals.

D. INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

1. **FACULTY.** Effective leadership will be a critical element in the success of colleges during the difficult years of the 1980s and 1990s. Surely, one of the most essential elements of effective leadership is the use of personnel resources in ways that will help the college to accomplish its objectives as effectively as possible.

The issues surrounding the analysis of faculty tasks are among the most complex faced by the college administrator. On the one hand, there is a well-founded belief that what the faculty member does in the process of teaching is different from most other forms of human endeavor and therefore cannot be analyzed best in terms used to understand other types of human activity. The teaching process resists quantification to some degree.

At the same time, because colleges are "people-intensive" and because a significant part of the "people" item in the budget is faculty salaries, it is reasonable that administrators and trustees insist on some measurement of what is being done for the money being spent. This measurement is particularly important in the current era, in which growth in one area of a college often requires redeployment of resources from another area. While such decisions are to a large extent value judgments, there are also ways to develop quantitative schemes that can help in the inevitable decision making process.

The *Faculty Task Analysis* module of the PDS provides information that will help independent colleges do a better job of managing their most important resource—faculty time and skills. Special features include a relatively simple data collection process; short turnaround time from data collection to receipt of reports; display of faculty activity information by task, rank, sex, and department; and the capability of analyzing the costs of these activities.

This PDS module will help administrators and faculty leaders answer such questions as:

- Are faculty members properly recognized and rewarded for the many tasks they perform?
- Does the distribution of a faculty member's time among a set of tasks coincide with the assigned and/or desired use of his time by the administration?
- Are some faculty members overloaded, while others are underused?
- Are senior faculty members spending their time in areas that represent the best possible use of their skills and experience?
- Are female faculty members used differently than male faculty members?
- Are junior faculty members assigned to larger classes more often than senior faculty?
- Which departments operate at relatively low cost? Why?

2. **LIBRARIES.** For many years, college administrators and librarians had to plan library programs and budgets in a kind of isolation, without assistance from new methods and tools in educational administration and planning. They have been without a reliable source of information on how their library costs,

programs, and services compare with those of other college libraries. Standards for measuring and evaluating library costs and services have been very traditional and largely internal to each institution.

A college library data system must be more than a simple inventory. It should enable a library to:

- Suggest methods and formats for collecting and maintaining information related to daily operations.
- Provide a basis for improving services to members of the campus community.
- Compare a library's program, service, and cost characteristics with those of libraries at other colleges.
- Collect, analyze and apply multi-year data for trend analysis and planning.
- Make library planning a part of total institutional planning.

The data system should describe college libraries collectively, in a manner and format that can influence state and national policy development and funding. The data also should be helpful for interpreting the library to the college's constituencies.

The purpose of the PDS *Library Costs and Services* module is the collection and display of information librarians need to analyze, plan, and manage library programs. The data provided by use of the module afford detailed analyses of these aspects of library operations.

- Distribution of library expenditures among personnel, library materials, and other classified expenses.
- Distribution of library personnel by function and personnel classification.
- Distribution of expenditures for library materials by type of material.
- Efficiency of specific library operations.
- Library resources and services.
- Level of institutional support for the library.

3. **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM.** Instruction generally is considered to be the primary function of a small college. A majority of the institution's resources are allocated to its instructional program, and most faculty, administrator, and staff time is expended in this area, either directly or indirectly. However, analysis, planning, and administration of the instructional program in most colleges traditionally have been haphazard, fragmented, and subject to political pressures. As a result, most colleges have very little "hard" information about the revenues and expenditures of academic departments or specific programs.

The problem in the past has been to find a suitable costing model for small colleges. It is not economically feasible for most colleges to design their own sophisticated costing models. Furthermore, prior to the development of the PDS, available complex costing models had not been tested extensively in the small college setting, and the simpler models were not adequate. The PDS model has been tested and widely used. It provides information but does not overload the institution's time and budget or require technical training of staff.

Areas covered by the *Instructional Program* module are:

- Faculty teaching loads and credit units.

- Distribution of faculty and student time by class size.
- Average class size.
- Credit unit productivity and instructional credit analysis.
- Tuition income and income/cost analysis.
- Credit contribution by department.
- Credit consumption by major.
- Program cost by major.

E. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

1. **STAFF.** Personnel expenditures constitute the largest single item in the operating budgets of small colleges, and the way in which they are managed critically affects a college's financial health and stability. Field-testing of this module has shown that nearly half of a college's personnel expenditures are for non-instructional personnel. In simple economic terms, personnel and compensation data for non-instructional personnel is an obvious need.

The general objectives of the *Personnel and Compensation* module are to provide data, indicate distinctive patterns,and suggest a process for analysis by which critical issues of college manpower resource management can be identified, understood, and resolved. Specific objectives of the module are:

- To identify the data elements and configurations of personnel and compensation information that appear to have particular utility for management of college manpower resources.
- To provide a reliable and uniform data base with which colleges can compare their manpower resources and associated costs in ways that will assist in the analysis, planning, and management of these resources.
- To examine specific questions about the distribution of personnel and compensation by employment categories. For example:
  a. What is the amount of time expended in each employment category? What percentage of total personnel time is expended?
  b. What percentage of total salary expenditures is paid to employees in each category.
  c. What percentage of total fringe-benefit expenditures is paid to employees in each category?
  d. What is the relationship (percentage) of fringe benefits to salary for each category? For the college as a whole?
- To provide a comprehensive manpower audit that will help to:
  a. Identify manpower resources available for achieving program objectives.
  b. Increase the positive effects of manpower management decisions on people.
  c. Maximize the effectiveness of the college or a program of the college by making possible more careful allocation of manpower resources.

d. Identify institutional efficiencies and areas in which cost-effectiveness can be improved.

- To provide understanding of the complexity of manpower management issues and sense of direction for desirable change.

2. **FUND RAISING.** If small independent colleges are to develop and maintain institutional strength, at least three conditions must be met. Although professional literature has paid much more attention to the first two conditions than to the third, all three are vital.

- Services to students must be better than or different from those at state-owned institutions in one or more areas.
- Management of fiscal resources must be sound and efficient.
- Management of fund-raising efforts must be skillful and thorough.

The *Fund Raising* module has been developed to meet some specific data needs of the small college resource development office. The specific objectives are:

- To foster uniform gift accounting, cost accounting, and solicitation reporting in small college resource development departments.
- To provide resource development personnel in small colleges with institutional and cross-institutional data that are useful in making management decisions.
- To provide planning and management systems for small college resource development offices.

Colleges participating in the *Fund Raising* module data service can use the data reports to:

- Improve the planning process.
- Improve management decisions.
- Reduce costs per dollar raised.
- Qualify and upgrade donors and programs.
- Project gift revenues more accurately.
- Improve gift reporting.
- Increase the credibility of the resource development program.
- Develop information for proposals to funding agencies.
- Evaluate the resource development department's efforts and achievements.

F. INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Taken as a whole, the above elements constitute a comprehensive operational information system. They enable the individual units to administer their affairs better, while at the same time providing an operational profile of the institution as a whole. It remains to suggest how institutions can execute the modules.

1. **AD HOC RESEARCH.** Most small colleges subscribe to and use helps and tools such as the PDS modules on an administrative unit basis. The director

of admissions, for example, will undertake an analysis of the recruitment process, while the dean will execute a faculty task analysis. Though there is some merit in doing things this way, it is unfortunate when there is no coordination or communication between the parties.

If an institution wishes to have the execution handled at the administrative unit level, then at least there should be some provision for coordination and cooperation. Since each of these areas of concern have implications for the entire institution, some ways need to be found for transferring that impact across administrative personnel lines. Most small colleges operate with a "cabinet" form of administration, and it is at the cabinet level that communication takes place. At this level, however, the details of the various reports and findings cannot be handled effectively. At a minimum, summaries of salient facts ought to be prepared for the cabinet and recommendations, where appropriate, should be prepared in advance.

2. **OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH.** Other institutions elect to appoint a director of institutional research whose responsibility is to execute an administrative information system. A great deal of ambiguity surrounds this position and the holder often will experience significant frustration. Furthermore, the office frequently is created without adequate thought given to its position within the administrative structure of the institution. The following recommendations are offered in order to make such a position as productive as possible:

- The position should be at the dean level.
- The position should report directly to the president.
- The position should be included in the administrative cabinet.
- The position should carry faculty rank and appointment.
- The position should be filled by a person with both faculty and administrative experience.
- The position should be full-time or as near full-time as feasible.
- The position should be filled by someone with some training and experience in research.

As can be seen by these recommendations, institutional research is not a trivial task. The problem with the position is that it will be taken either too seriously or not seriously enough. And the ability to gain the confidence of everyone at all levels is critical. People with information are people with power and, hence, are always subject to unusual pressures on a college campus.

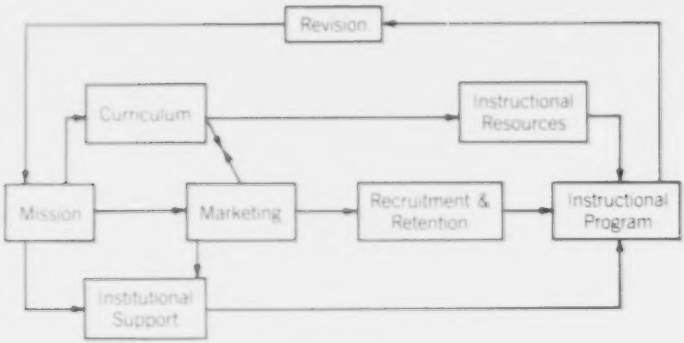
Nevertheless, this person should be involved in virtually all the data gathering and analysis of the institution. Since small colleges typically are administered through people and not through structures, the link between data and information emerging in the various units must also be a person. The skills and personal style required are critical indeed.

3. **AGENDA.** The purpose of an office of institutional research is to provide administrative information for the improvement of the operation of the institution. There is always a temptation to gather and disseminate "interesting" data simply because it is interesting. The first problem, therefore, is to distinguish between that information which will enhance the performance of the institution and that which is merely of interest.

The first step in making this distinction is to construct a framework or a model through which a first level of discrimination can be accomplished. Figure 3 below illustrates such a framework. It locates each of the major tasks and shows its relationship to the central task of the college.

FIGURE 3

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM



This framework is not a model of the flow of information or activities within a college. Rather it is a diagram of necessary elements and their interrelationships.

The second step is to survey the decision making processes of the institution to determine informational requirements. This is a difficult and frustrating task because collegiate decision making is often vague. It also is complicated by the fact that administrative personnel often do not know or cannot specify in detail the data and information required for their responsibilities. This is not to be construed as a weakness, but rather as evidence of the intuitive nature of most collegiate administrative decisions. The rule of thumb here, therefore, is to keep the requirements as modest and simple as possible.

The Planning and Data System was designed to provide data and information in each of the areas shown in the above diagram. There is at least one module for each area. The modules require minimal time and effort to implement and provide a relatively small amount of information. In practice, many institutions find a need to go beyond these minimal levels. However, decisions about expanding research activities should arise out of experience, rather than advance speculation.

3. **PRODUCTS.** There are several products of an Office of Institutional Research:

a. Perhaps the most valuable is an annual *Fact Book*. This is a compilation of the broadest possible range of factual information and statistical data on the

institution. It can be used by almost everyone associated with the college. It is helpful if comparisons with peer institutions and national sample groups can be included.

b. Reports and analyses covering various operational units of the institution are second in importance (e.g., those produced by the PDS). These are formal products. They will appear in printed form with detail and documentation attached. The actual form in which they appear is important. They should include three parts. First, there should be a summary of the findings in lay terms. Second, there should be the data displayed in easily readable form. Third, there should be documentation of the research on which the data and analysis are based.

c. Interpretation and analysis of various parts of the institution are required in both formal and informal formats. As we have said frequently, small colleges tend to administer through people rather than through structures. This means that the informal reports, discussions, observations, and comments of a director of research tend to be more influential and valuable than the formal, printed documents. However, it is essential to understand that there must be a source for these informal remarks. Documentation in the form of data and information are critical.

d. Every five or ten years, the director of institutional research will have a chance to test his or her skills on the self-study report and documentation required for accreditation. However, if systematic processes for collection and analysis of data and information are a regular affair, it need not be too formidable. Only in those cases where it must all be done from the bottom up will the job look overwhelming. The director ought to take advantage of the help provided by the accrediting associations, at least the first time around.

G. BUDGETING

Up to this point the processes we have described are rather conventional. They suggest that an institution define its purpose, specify its objectives, and delineate the ways in which the objectives are to be realized. It remains to determine the financial resources available to perform the tasks. There are a number of budgeting systems and methods available to small colleges. In choosing an approach, the following considerations should be given careful attention.

1. Ownership of a budget is in direct proportion to participation in the process of its development. In successful colleges, this process is an open and widely participatory one. (The NACUBO planning system outlines such a process which has proven to be very successful at many small colleges.)

2. Careful revenue and expenditure projections are absolutely necessary. The long-term costs of commitments such as tenure can be very great.

3. Financial performance is relative; therefore the only sure measures are comparisons with other colleges of similar size, circumstance, and program.

Ratio analysis and comparative studies are the closest things to objective measures for colleges.

4. Expenditure controls are a necessary corollary to budgeting. A budget is no better than the controls on its implementation. This process must be open and "owned" if it is to work to the benefit of the institution.

5. Since most small colleges have been leveraging growth for the past several years, a practice which came to a halt in the 1980s, a highly conservative approach to budgeting and spending is in order. Careful down-sizing of most operations is called for. Budgets should make this obvious.

CONCLUSIONS

This guide began with a discussion of the characteristics of successful small college administration. It sought to sort through those characteristics to determine how they could be arranged so that the fullest resources of an institution could be brought to the process of focusing attention on the future. In doing this, we have found it necessary to look at both the style of successful leadership in these institutions and the operating systems which characterize them. We had to do this because the methods of future focused planning cannot be understood or appreciated fully without a grasp of the context in which they are carried out. That context is illustrated in Figure 4.

It is not by accident that each of the three areas shown in this diagram begin with a reference to the mission of the institution. These institutions were created out of a mission and they continue because of a mission. It is the mission which filters opportunities and ultimately determines the destiny.

Though it may not always be obvious—even to people working at small colleges—there is little object in worrying about leadership, planning, or administering if the college is not self-conscious about where it is going and why. Nor is there much point in looking for new opportunities in changing circumstances if the college has neither the will nor the flexibility to respond. The anticipation of change in the environment must be accompanied by creative initiatives if the exercise is to have any meaning. The first issue is one of will. There must be a willingness to change. We are all subject to psychological inertia as well as justifiable—and probably unjustifiable—resistance to deviations from normal patterns. There are also built-in organizational, political, and personal impediments to change. Between these two, the resistance of social organizations is notorious. But these realities must not be allowed to determine the future of any college.

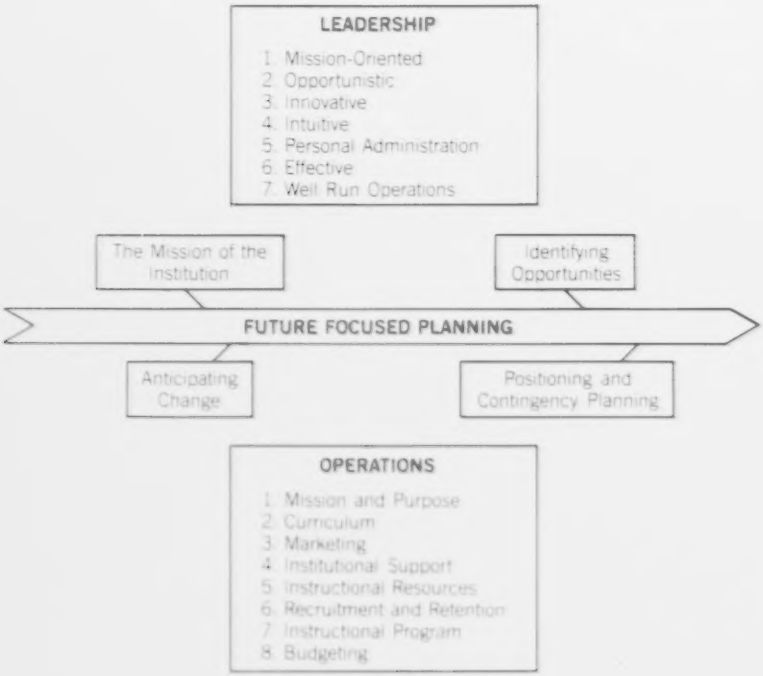
In this manual we have addressed these issues as they appear on successful college campuses. We have sought to describe successful college characteristics while at the same time suggesting ways in which these characteristics can be enhanced and brought into the foreground. None of this can guarantee success, but it does appear to be a necessary condition of success. If there is optimism in what we have said it is because the evidence of the creativity and resiliency which has typified these colleges throughout their entire history is still there.

Successful small college administration looks like a sailboat race. In such a

race, there is one objective; namely, to round the mark first. There is no doubt about this objective, but to realize it one must tack back and forth, avoid obstacles, accommodate changes in the direction and force of the wind, adjust to the flow of the tide, and always maneuver within the fleet. No matter how skilled the skipper, he cannot predict his course in detail (a course that appears to the uninitiated as pure confusion), but his winning the race is nevertheless a function of skill—obviously—since the same skippers keep winning race after race. A skilled entrepreneurial president skippers his institution toward a clear and definable goal—what the institution is to become in the next five years—but each tack and maneuver is a creative response to the condition at hand. No action can be described in detail in advance, but achievement of the goal is nevertheless a function of skill.

FIGURE 4

LEADERSHIP, PLANNING, AND OPERATIONS IN SMALL COLLEGES



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